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COOPERATED CALENDAR

The Late Summer Fruit and Vegetable Market

A dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics and Mr. Gustave Burmeister, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Thursday, August 26, 1937.

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MR. SALISBURY:

Here we are in Washington. And according to our good old Thursday custom, here's Ruth Van Deman ready to give you another of her reports on the research of the Bureau of Home Economics - the work it carries on for the benefit of homemakers and consumers.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Thank you, Morse. That's a very nice introduction. But I'm afraid it doesn't quite fit today. I was planning to have Mr. Burmeister here do most of the talking, and give us the low-down, or the high-up, or whatever, on the fresh fruit and vegetable situation.

MR. SALISBURY:

Then you're speaking for the consumer.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

And the home canner. And the homemaker who still has some empty jelly glasses and preserve jars she wants to fill.

MR. SALISBURY:

Any pickle jars, I hope. Don't forget the homemade watermelon pickles, Ruth.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Morse, you're just like the elephant who never forgets, when it comes to watermelon pickles.

MR. SALISBURY:

Probably so. I do have a certain predilection for watermelon pickles. But you and Mr. Burmeister go ahead and leave me and the elephants with our memories.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

All right, Morse. Mr. Burmeister and I'll just take our cue from the watermelons. What about them, many still on the market?

MR. BURMEISTER:

Yes, quite a lot, but shipments will fall off sharply during September. And probably early October will see the last of the watermelons for this year.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Then pickle and preserve makers better gather their watermelon rinds while they may.

(over)



HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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MR. BURMEISTER:

Yes, the season's drawing to a close. But this has been one of the biggest watermelon years on record. The total commercial crop is estimated at around 75 million.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Seventy-five million watermelons?

MR. BURMEISTER:

That's right. Just for the fun of it, we figured that if they were laid end to end seventy-five million watermelons would reach about two-thirds around the world.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Quite a watermelon belt. And piled end on end, how many Washington monuments would they build?

MR. BURMEISTER:

I'll have to get out my slide rule again for that.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Never mind. I didn't really mean that. We'd rather you told us about the prospects for late peaches.

MR. BURMEISTER:

For late peaches? Very good. Very good indeed. In fact this is a year of plenty for practically all fruits and vegetables. With peaches, several of the more northern States are shipping now. Good peaches are coming from Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. And of course there are lots of locally grown and consumed peaches that never get into our market reports.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Sold at roadside stands, I suppose.

MR. BURMEISTER:

That's right. Of course they're generally not graded. When you buy a basket of peaches at a roadside stand, you're likely to find some big and some not so big. And some may be ripe, and some green enough to keep for several days. But on the whole the consumer generally gets his money's worth from these peaches.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

How are prices running this year?

MR. BURMEISTER:

Lower this year than last. Lots of roadside stands are selling local peaches for a dollar a bushel.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Those, mostly Elbertas and other good canning varieties?

MR. BURMEISTER:

Yes, Elbertas and Hileys. The late clings will be coming along soon. I think they're considered especially good for pickling.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

And do you have a predilection, as Mr. Salisbury says, for peach pickles, the way he does for watermelon pickles?

MR. BURMEISTER:

I confess I do, Miss Van Deman.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Nothing to be ashamed of. A very epicurean taste on the part of you both. Now, tell us how the pear crop stands. I've heard that it's a bumper also this year.

MR. BURMEISTER:

It is. Very much so. We have the largest crop of pears on record -- over thirty million bushels. California as you know, is the great growers of Bartletts.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Yes, I drove through the pear orchards of Lake County, California, in July. They tell me that's the place they put the pretty pink blush on the cheek of the Bartlett.

MR. BURMEISTER:

Yes, the pink-cheeked California Bartletts are famous. They go all over the country fresh and canned. And some of the late pears -- the Boscs and the Anjous -- from the Pacific Northwest are exported to Europe and other countries. In the three States of California, Oregon, and Washington, there's a crop of about 19-1/2 million bushels of pears this year. And just as with the peaches, many pears are grown and marketed locally in almost every part of the country.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I suppose the Kieffer pears come in that category.

MR. BURMEISTER:

That's right.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I'll have something to say about them in a week or two in connection with pear preserves. How we stand on grapes this year?

MR. BURMEISTER:

We have over two millions of tons of grapes -- the largest crop since 1928. Of course that figure includes the wine varieties and the muscats and others that are dried for raisins. But there's an abundance of table grapes East and West. Plenty to make jelly to fill up those empty glasses you spoke of, Miss Van Deman. And the price is reasonable, not to say cheap in some places.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Good. That is good for us consumers. Probably not so good for producers. Mr. Burmeister, I understand this is another apple year, a really big apple year.

MR. BURMEISTER:

Absolutely. Indications are for more apples than we've had since 1931. Something over 200,000,000 bushels of apples are due to be picked, and packed, and marketed this winter if the market will take them.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

That's quite a pile of apples, 200,000,000 bushels. How many apples are there to a bushel?

MR. BURMEISTER:

48 pounds.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I mean in number of apples.

MR. BURMEISTER:

Oh about I should say, taken on the average.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Then, two hundred million times , would be?

MR. BURMEISTER:

Lets see (figuring), about 40 billion apples.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

And the last census counted about 129 million persons in this country.

MR. BURMEISTER:

Now I see what you're driving at, Miss Van Deman the per capita distribution of this year's apple crop.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

That's it. Here, Morse, you figure that out for us while we check down the vegetable list.

MR. BURMEISTER:

With one or two exceptions late summer and winter vegetables are plentiful, reasonable in price (from the consumer's standpoint), and good in quality. There's been a big yield of potatoes, - early, intermediate, and late varieties. There's an unusually large crop of late snap beans. Cabbage is abundant, despite unfavorable growing conditions in some areas. And celery is coming along well.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

And tomatoes?

MR. BURMEISTER:

We're expecting a record autumn crop of tomatoes.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

That's good news for autumn home canners. Those who took it easy during the hot weather and waited for cooler days for their last canning.

Morse, I see you have the answer to that arithmetic problem on the apples.

MR. SALISBURY:

Yes, I'm still able to do a little long division. The answer is 310 apples for every man, woman, and child in the United States of America.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Three hundred and ten apples per capita. On the "apple a day" plan, the doctors can all have a vacation this winter.

Thank you, Mr. Burmeister, for coming over today and giving us this fruit and vegetable review. Next week I'll hold a round table for home canners, probably the last one for this season. And there, Morse, this is my last word for today.

